

The Sunday School Service.

BY DAVID BAILEY.

Nov. 23rd 1884.

Solomon's Proverbs.—Prov. 1: 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.—Prov. 1: 7.

[Open the Bible and read the lesson.]

INTRODUCTION.

It is a question in what part of Solomon's life these proverbs were written. If, as some conjecture they were written when Solomon was old, it would appear that he acknowledged the error of his way and was penitently advising others to beware of like sins. But on the other hand, if they were written while he was yet young, it shows all the more plainly his failure to apply his philosophy to the practical affairs of life. We are unfortunately, not informed in sacred writ, what effect God's reproof had upon Solomon, but, as he was not put forward as a model, and the curse of God was not in any way modified, we must conclude that his heart was hardened to such a degree that the anger of Jehovah was without effect, so far as he was concerned.

As an evidence of Solomon's wisdom it is said that he "spoke three thousand proverbs." These are not all recorded and some that are in the book are credited to other parties, as king Lemuel and Agur the son of Jakeh.

The book of Proverbs has been called the hand-book of Hebrew ethics; and it might be presumed that the Hebrew school boy was required to use it as a kind of a catechism to be used in gaining their first insight into their duty to their God and their neighbors. Be that as it may, the author of these proverbs should have known better than to have surrendered his God-given prerogative for a few of the passing pleasures of earth, which yield no true satisfaction in the end. He had it in his power to be the father of a long line of prosperous kings, but it was not so to be.

He learned wisdom but it profited him nothing. He preached to others but himself became a castaway. To use his own language "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow."

LESSON.

Verse 1. "Proverbs." A proverb is a sentence which briefly and forcibly expresses some practical truth. In this book there are many connected discourses which would not, properly, be classed as proverbs, but the nature of the book is such that it is proper to give it the name it bears.

Verse 2. Here the writer begins to tell of the utility of proverbs. "To know wisdom and instruction." It is exceedingly difficult to form an opinion as to what is meant by this expression.

Verse 3. "Justice * * equity." Justice is a man's right under the law, while equity gives an individual rights that the law will not guarantee.

Verse 4. "Subtly." Shrewdness, rather than craftiness; craftiness would be the meaning of the word in a bad sense. "Simple." Those inexperienced in worldly matters. "Discretion." Caution in applying the knowledge. This also refers to the object in writing the book.

Verse 5. "Will hear." The instructions given in this book. One less wise would let them pass unheeded.

Verse 6. "To understand a proverb." This is a continuation of the preceding verse making specifications of the general statement "wise counsels." "Dark sayings." Probably things said in parables.

Verse 7. "The fear of the Lord." The reverential fear, that which makes us obey and honor. "Fools." Such as are referred to by the psalmist where he speaks of those who say there is no God. "Despise." They glory in their want of what the writer here calls true wisdom.

Verse 8. "My son." Solomon here speaks as an old man, and this has led many to suppose that these proverbs were written in his old age. "Father." Next after the fear of the Lord, Solomon places the submission to parental authority. "Mother." Christianity advances the authority of a mother to a place near that of the father.

Verse 9. "They." Instruction and law. "Ornament of grace." Referring the chaplet often placed upon the brow of the victor in the games. "Chains." Received as a token of favor.

Verse 10. "If sinners entice thee." This is addressed to those who have received wisdom and means that they should beware of evil companions. "Consent thou not." Repel their advances promptly or you may be influenced by their association.

Verses 11-14. These verses represent the language of the tempters when they would try to deceive some young men who were good intentioned. The language is applicable to a band of robbers, which were numerous in Palestine.

Verse 15. Having told how they would approach the innocent, he now advises the young men to shun them. The reason for this is given in verse 16, where he says that "their feet run to evil and make haste to shed blood," meaning that they are continually in mischief and that they do not hesitate to commit murder.

Notes and Jottings.

A few days since, by special request, I left home en route for the Brethren church at Auburn, Illinois. I arrived in Chicago without anything special to note save that the train was too late for me to go directly to Auburn, hence I began to inquire where the best place to pass away time in a pleasant and profitable way was to be found. I was directed to Lincoln Park. In the company of brother A. F. Clapper, whom I had met in the waiting room, I was soon on a street car, for the place, which when found, proved to be the most interesting of the kind, by far, that I had ever seen. If I had had the time I would have learned more about it, and given our readers the benefit; suffice it to say that it will amply repay anyone to visit this park of note and see the wonders of God as displayed through human instrumentality.

Here is a collection of flowers and house plants of every description, animals of all species,—bears, wolves, lions, sea lions, buffaloes, deer, &c., &c., even down to the prairie dog. Fowls and birds from the innocent dove up to the Pharisaical pea-fowl. The most peculiar of all to me were the seals placed in a large water vase perhaps 150 feet in circumference. They would swim around and around without any rest or change whatever. There were three of them. One, we observed, when he came to a certain place turned over every time, just as regular as the strokes of a clock. This reminded me of the condition of some Christians. They have their circle in which they move, and never go out of this to help others. They have about one prayer to offer and it makes no difference what the change of circumstances. The one prayer is all they know. I remember when a boy I used to attend a prayer meeting in the M— church, Pa., being a close observer, I found when the church was having a special shower of grace and as a consequence, souls were converted, or when there seemed to be a spiritual dearth, the prayers were just the same. Why, sir, I memorized some of those prayers; they were stereotyped. In looking at those seals, the above thoughts crowded themselves upon me. And the cause seems evident—a lack of growth in the service of God. O Lord, help us all from tending toward formality! but may we, in serving Thee, feel present needs and present blessings.

Returning to the depot, we boarded the train on the Chicago & Alton R. R., for Auburn. Were met by brother John Beechly and conveyed to his home, where we met for the first time his kind and interesting family.

Following me here is a letter from brother Samuel Deffenbaugh, Perry county, Ohio, telling me of the death and funeral of sister Hattie Leach, a young, worthy sister in their church, perhaps twenty-one years of age. We give below a part of this letter for the encouragement of the young who may read our paper:

GLENFORD, Perry county, O., Nov. 3, 1884.

Dear Brother Mallott: We thought we would have to write you a few lines this evening to let you know that sister Hattie Leach is dead. She died Friday evening, and was buried yesterday—Sunday. Hattie lived the life of a Christian and she died the death of a Christian. Just before she died she sang the hymn:

"There is a gate that stands ajar,
And through it portals gleaming,
A radiance from the cross afar
The Savior's love revealing."

She then prayed, waved her hand to those in the room, and quietly passed away.

Oh, can we ask for a more beautiful picture! Sister Hattie, one year ago was among the sweet singers here who helped us in a short protracted effort. The angels in glory have an addition to their choir, and although here voice of praise cannot be heard by us while we are in this world of trouble, yet we shall greet her and hear her in heaven above, where her wasted, emaciated body will be exchanged for one fashioned like unto the Redeemer's.

R. F. MALLOTT.

Auburn, Ill., Nov. 7.

Precipitation is the ruin of young, delay, the ruin of the old.

Every good deed that we do is not only a pleasure, but a prop for the future.

Lay by a good store of patience, but be sure to put it where you can find it.

No man can be happy without a friend, or sure of a friend until he is unfortunate.

Good men are sometimes in greater danger for saying the truth than evil men for speaking falsely.

Closing Exercises of the Fair Haven Sabbath School.

The closing exercises of the Fair Haven Sabbath school, under the management of our faithful and efficient superintendent, brother M. B. Painter, took place at the church on Saturday, Nov. 9th, 1884. The house was comfortably filled, and the best of interest manifested and good order prevailed. I went down not knowing that it was to be so extensive an affair, and to my surprise found that sister Clara Miller's organ by some means had found its way into the church, and that among other pleasing things fifty-five pounds of candy had been procured as a treat for the children, and quite a programme of interesting performances was in store for us.

1st. Essay by sister Clara Miller, entitled, "Parting."

2nd. Essay by Ida Shidler, entitled, "Memory."

3rd. Address by B. F. Swinehart,—"Growth of the young."

4th. Address by Wm. Kiefer,—"Reap what we sow."

5th. Essay by sister Gusta Worst,—"Glimpse of Heaven."

6th. Declaration by Della Kiefer,—"Starless Crown."

7th. Declaration by Lida Painter, "Boys are Wanted."

8th. Declaration by Frances Swinehart, "Beautiful Land of Nod."

9th. Declaration by Rose Sechrist, "Shut the Door."

10th. Declaration by Verney McFadden, "What is Faith?"

11th. Declaration by Edward Sechrist, "The Well and the Wave."

12th. Speech by P. J. Brown, of all sorts, (forget what he did say.)

These speeches, essays and declamations were interspersed with the choicest of instrumental and vocal music, which, in the language of brother Kiefer was "good enough for heaven." Brave little folks they are.

After these were all rendered the several teachers gathered their classes into groups, and distributed the candy, pictures, cards and things, till all, old and young, were well treated. Then with another rare piece of music, and benediction, the crowd was dismissed, to meet on Sabbath morning for the final lesson. A vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Samuel Thorley, the secretary, for his very faithful part of the work. The superintendent also made a very able and impressive speech, and all felt that the Fair Haven Sabbath school is doing a good work. The secretary will make a report of the numerical and financial condition of the school, which we hope to see printed in the columns of the EVANGELIST.

Now we look forward with fond anticipations to next term, which will probably open about the middle of April, 1884, and during which term we hope to entertain with pleasure the Sunday School Convention of North-eastern Ohio. "Oh, who will be there?" Probably some of those who enjoyed these closing exercises will sleep in the new cemetery. We still hope many of the classes of 1884 will witness the convention of 1885.

P. J. BROWN.

Fair Haven, O.

Tell the Readers About It.

Brother Niswander, of South English, promised to tell the readers of the EVANGELIST about the Iowa meetings. Where art thou, Henry? Why don't you tell about our meetings on and about the doorsteps of the German Baptist church, and the Liberty school house meeting, and those conservative boys who behaved so badly about the door of the house that evening.

Brother I. M. Gibson, of Surrip Grove, was to tell about the meetings held at Washington and Girard, Illinois, and the organization at Girard. I have not seen any account of this work, but probably brother Gibson did not care to tell the readers of the paper that one by the name of I. M. Gibson was set apart as their minister. Come out with it, brother Gibson. Your grandfathers on both sides of the house were noted ministers, and your father (D. B. Gibson) is a noted evangelist in the German Baptist church, but in sentiment he is a whole-souled brother.

We have held some meetings since we came here, and now the church numbers fifty members. Last evening we had a called meeting in the church in Edna Mills, at the close of the services the church received into fellowship a man who had been a missionary in the Baptist church for a number of years, then joined the Dunkard church, and was expelled because he preached a few sermons without permission, and when arraigned he would not say, "I did wrong and I ask you to forgive me." More anon.

J. H. SWIHART.

It is living twice to be able to enjoy the past portion of life.

The Best Last.

The exclamation of the governor of the feast at the wedding in Cana, is suggestive of a great principle.

"Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk"—that is, when satiety has begun to come and the pleasurable and discerning sense has slackened—"then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now," the governor said.

And herein is disclosed a constant principle concerning the gifts of Christ. This glory streams from him—that what he gives does not pall and fail, does not perish with the using, does not grow from more to less, but grows from less to more. Evermore Christ's last is best.

Just at this time there was a man living who had the whole world in his control. To him as to a greedy center were flowing constantly the fairest, choicest things the world could give. For him the most precious vintage. For him the rarest luxuries of earth and sea and various climates.

A little after this, that he might lay off all care, and meet no hinderance as he fed himself with all voluptuous pleasures, he withdrew to an island, soft with the tenderest sunshine and delicious with enchanting shade, and fascinating with smooth verdure and swelling hill—the island of Capree, set there like an emerald amid the sapphire waters of the Bay of Naples. He tried, perhaps, the highest experiment ever tried as to the real and continued satisfaction of the world's best wine.

Tristissimus ut constat hominum—it is confessed the most gloomy of mankind, says Pliny of him. And from amidst his splendid experiments with the world's wine, from his wealth inestimable, from his freedom from care, from his green bowers of pleasantness, from his palaces, the richest the world could build, from his utterly ungirded and Titanic self-indulgence, the wretched Tiberius, the emperor of all the world, can only send out this wail to the Roman Senate: "May all the gods and goddesses destroy me worse than I daily feel if I know, Conscript Fathers, what to write to you."

Ah! the world's wine palls. There is an adder in its cups. It stings with remorse. It blights with the shadow of coming and certain doom.

See Paul, victor though defeated, triumphing under the very gleam of Nero's sword: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

See John Wesley, with the rapturous smile upon his face, saying, with dying breath: "The best of all is, God is with us."

Hear the Christian Bishop Janes, settled firmly for a life long on the Rock of Ages sounding forth this as his dying testimony: "I am not disappointed."

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

That city may be ours if we will have it so; if we will but give ourselves by faith to Christ. For we shall swing inward those gates of pearl; the gold, as it was transparent glass, shall be pavement for our feet; for us all tears shall be wiped away, and death be vanquished and sorrow be helpless to scale the jeweled walls protecting us, and pain shall never pierce us more. And then, how true it will be, what better language for our lips than this, "Master, thou hast kept the kept good wine until now."—WAYLAND HOTT, D. D., in *Independent*.

No Time to Read.

We have often encountered many who profess to believe they have no time to read. Now, we think of it, there have always been men of such characters, the points of which are easily summed up.

Nine times out of ten they are men who have not found time to confer any substantial advantage either upon their families or upon themselves.

They frequently spend whole days in gossiping, tippling, and swapping horses, but they have no time to read.

They sometimes spend a day asking advice of their neighbors; sometimes a day in picking up news, the prices current, and the exchange, but these men never "have time to read."

Such men generally have uneducated children, unimproved farms, and unhappy firesides. They have no energy, no spirit of improvement, no love of knowledge; they live "unknowing and unknown," and often die unwept and unregretted.